

NERA Teleconference Minutes (Zoom meeting)
December 6, 2018
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM EST

In attendance: Jan Nyrop, Carol Thornber, Jon Wraith, Gary Thompson, Bill Miller, Brad Hillman, Eric Wommack, Sabine O'Hara, Ted Andreadis, Rubie Mize (UMD), Rick Rhodes (NERA ED), David Leibovitz (NERA Coordinator)

1. Agenda approval
 - Requested additions: Consideration of Northeast AA for NRSP10, Nominee for incoming Chair for the ESS/CES/AHS Communications and Marketing Committee
 - **The agenda, including the additions above, was approved unanimously.**
2. Approval of [minutes from NERA meeting, October 2, 2018](#)
 - **The minutes were approved unanimously.**
3. MAC report (Rick Rhodes on behalf of Fred Servello)
 - Requests to write approved: NE_TEMP1939 (renewal of NE1439), NE_TEMP1943 (renewal of NE1443), NE18609 (new CC or Multistate Project - *Integrating Genomics and Breeding for Improved Aquaculture Production of Molluscan Shellfish*), NE_TEMP1944 (New Multistate Project to replace ERA - *Management of the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug*)
 - NERA Funding Support for Grant Applications
 - NERA-1901: *(Epi)Genomically-informed Breeding of Bivalve Mollusks* [Team lead: Dr. Marta Gomez-Chiarri, University of Rhode Island] was approved by the MAC.
 - Eric Wommack, AA for NE18609, *Integrating Genomics and Breeding for Improved Aquaculture Production of Molluscan Shellfish*
 - Question from Jon Wraith: Has NERA/anybody considered whether the new aquaculture project might be opened up more widely beyond molluscan shellfish?
 - Not yet, but there is capacity in the region for other new aquaculture projects in other areas, e.g. finfish. This would complement activities underway at the NE Regional Aquaculture Center
 - **NERA approved the appointment of Eric Wommack as the Administrative Adviser for NE18609.**
 - AA responsibilities
 - AAs do not approve Multistate participants. Participants are driven by the Appendix E form, which is approved by the individual's station Director.

- Rubie Mize: The AA evaluates the continuation of projects after mid-term review and as renewal approaches
 - Sabine O'Hara: Took over for NE1439 and had to advise/organize the group to get the renewal team focused on common research questions
 - **The MAC report was approved unanimously.**
- 4. NERA Budget Projections (a conversation about future assessments, Rick Rhodes)
 - Supporting docs on the NERA website (<http://www.nerasaes.org/neradirs>)
 - Them of conversation: "Fiscal Fitness"
 - The NERA Budget is in good shape as of today.
 - NERA ought to consider thinking strategically on the budget rather than reacting to serendipity (as we have done since 2002.)
 - The last increase in NERA member assessments was in July 2002.
 - Objective set by NERA in 2013: prepare for future needs. Starting in 2015, the NERA budget should include a 3-month cash reserve.
 - Non-profit industry standard for cash reserves: 25-100% of the annual organizational dues.
 - Observation in 2014: NERA budget was not sustainable, and an increase was proposed and included a suggested 4% annual inflation increase which did not happen.
 - July 2015: NERA formed a subcommittee of Fred Servello, Gary Thompson, Brad Hillman to consider models for leadership of NERA that could reduce the budget burden.
 - Three models were considered: Full-time OED, part-time OED, or shared OED with NEED
 - 2016: Dan Rossi (former ED) retired, Rubie Mize left NERA, Rick Rhodes hired as ED, David Leibovitz hired as NERA Coordinator, no overhead costs for being hosted at URI.
 - Projection in 2018: NERA will not fall below the 25% cash reserve position until after FY22
 - Scenarios for the future of NERA's budget are posted on the NERA Director Documents webpage
 - Gary Thompson: 0% increase gives NERA three years, 1% increase looks OK through 2023, 2% keeps carryover healthy through 2024. We could stay with a 0% increase and re-examine in three years (rather than a 5-year window)
 - Carol Thornber: Should an inflation increase be built in for the NERA operating budget?
 - Jan Nyrop: The budget models show that we don't need to act on an increase today. Historically, NERA has kicked the can down the road and reacted as-needed.
 - **Motion introduced: Increase the NERA budget by 1% as of the FY20 assessment. Then, every year we re-examine the budget and potential inflation increases using 3 to 5-year budget projections.**

- **David will include the call for award nominees to the NERA Directors in the next NERA News.**
6. ED contract renewal update
- This process will be conducted by NERA Chair Jody Jellison as a follow-up to Jan Nyrop's activities leading up to the NERA fall 2018 business meeting.
7. Other business?
- Adel Shirmohammadi wants to know if there is any feedback on the Capacity Grants budget in FY2020: will NERA draft a letter to NIFA? Is this cumbersome to anybody aside from the University of Maryland?
 - NERA can draft a letter to NIFA if there is feedback collected from the directors.
 - Strategic realignment: this is primarily an advocacy effort to consolidate the budget lines down to 1 with three categories within the one line.
 - Similar to the approach NIH has used, advocating for one top-line budget
 - Congress has a voice on how the money is distributed
 - "Appropriations 101" was originally a Cornerstone webinar targeted for the Strategic Realignment subcommittee, and is being repackaged into a national webinar
 - Webinars on strategic realignment are forthcoming, and NERA will set up discussions on strategic realignment for either the March Zoom meeting or the summer business meeting in DC.
 - Consider hosting (in combination with another region or with NEED) a grantsmanship workshop. No decision necessary at this time, we will revisit this topic in either March or June.
 - Rick Rhodes reached out to the regional EDs to gauge interest and gather resources that they may be sharing with their directors.
 - Online? Face-to-face?
 - Historically, the NE region spearheaded grantsmanship workshops under Tom Fretz and Dave MacKenzie

The meeting adjourned at 12:06pm.